

Illinois Department of Transportation

2300 South Dirksen Parkway / Springfield, Illinois / 62764

August 30, 2004

Annual Permits for Overweight Vehicles
and Posting of "Legal Load Only" Bridges

County Engineers/Superintendent of Highways
Municipal Engineers/Director of Public Works

#04-12

The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), in response to and in anticipation of the passage of legislation that will allow IDOT and Local Agencies (LA) to issue long-term permits for vehicles exceeding the legal weights and configurations currently specified in the Illinois Vehicle Code, will be erecting weight limit signs on state highways to identify bridges that cannot be crossed by the "overweight" vehicles. This circular letter provides local agencies with information and implementation procedures pertaining to this legislation. These measures are necessary to provide a level of safety consistent with federal standards.

Legislation. The following is a synopsis of the status of those legislative bills allowing increased highway loads, most involving the issuance of permits for specific vehicles.

HB0720: This bill was **approved by the Governor on August 25, 2004** as Public Act 93-1023 and **is effective immediately upon becoming law**. The legislation allows annual permits to be issued for towing vehicles to haul disabled trucks with 1) greater axle weights; and 2) for a greater distance than presently allowed by the Illinois Vehicle Code.

HB2786: This bill has not passed the General Assembly. Since the Department has not opposed the bill and was very much involved in the writing of the bill, we still expect eventual passage. This bill will allow long-term permits to be issued to specific overweight vehicles, such as concrete pump trucks, cranes and well drilling vehicles.

HB4457: This bill, which has passed the House and has been forwarded to the Senate, addresses the total weight allowed on a group of axles for trucks used exclusively for the transportation and mixing of concrete. The bill will essentially eliminate the use of a "road surface engaging mixer trailing axle", and will allow more weight to be carried by the fixed axles of the truck.

HB4458: This bill was **approved by the Governor on July 13, 2004** as Public Act 93-0718 with **an effective date of January 1, 2005**. With the passage of the bill, long-term permits can be issued, for trucks transporting raw milk to allow axles weighing up to 20,000 pounds and a maximum gross vehicle weight of 80,000 pound.

SB2327: This bill was **approved by the Governor on August 20, 2004** as Public Act 93-0971 and **is effective immediately upon becoming law**. The legislation will allow long-term permits to be issued to trucks hauling farm products, allowing them to exceed currently established legal axle weights and, to some degree, current maximums for gross vehicle weight. Of all bills proposed, SB2327 will have the greatest impact in regard to deterioration of roads and bridges.

The following is a summary of bills that have been approved or are currently active:

Approved Bills	Active Bills
HB0720 (Tow Trucks)	HB2786 (Conc. Pump Trucks, etc)
HB4458 (Milk Trucks)	HB4457 (Conc. Transport/Mixers)
SB2327 (Farm Trucks)	

Effects of Legislation. The passage of this legislation will allow heavier vehicles to regularly use state and local highways, without coordination with the jurisdictional agency immediately before each trip to obtain a permit.

A structural assessment was performed by IDOT to evaluate the load-carrying capacity of the bridges contained in the Illinois Structure Information System (ISIS). This assessment provided a list of bridges that can carry routine traffic within the limits specified for legally configured vehicles, but cannot routinely carry the vehicles allowed by the legislation. These bridges are commonly referred to as "Legal Load Only" (LLO) bridges. The structures determined to be LLO structures are considered safe for carrying routine traffic within the limits specified for those vehicles regarded as legally configured vehicles by the Illinois Vehicle Code. This list is based primarily on the loads allowed by SB2327; we therefore do not anticipate the list changing with the passage of the Active Bills.

Overweight vehicles should not cross these LLO bridges, and permits allowing travel over these bridges should not be issued. Vehicles traveling with annual permits must still obey posted weight limits. Weight limit signs erected adjacent to LLO bridges will alert vehicles operating under an annual permit of the need to use an alternate route.

The local agency should also consider the adequacy and condition of the roadway, and of structures less than or equal to bridge length (20.0 feet).

State Owned Highways. In response to this legislation, IDOT will erect weight limit signs on state owned highways to identify bridges that cannot be crossed by overweight permit vehicles. Approximately 261 structures on highways under the jurisdiction of IDOT will be posted with weight limit signs similar to that shown on the attached illustration.

Local Agency Structures. In order to access the state highway system, companies using the types of vehicles specified in the approved/active legislative bills will often use roadways under the jurisdiction of LAs. The legislation provides the LA with the ability to issue an annual permit to the companies using the specified vehicles, which will allow the companies' vehicles routine access to roadways designated by the LA. If there are firms or heavy vehicle generators within your geographical area that use the vehicles addressed by the legislative bills, we recommend that you contact the companies to identify and coordinate routes for their use in accessing state highways.

Local agencies may elect to restrict permitted vehicles by limiting the vehicle to specific routes, by providing locations of restricted structures and routes, and/or by erecting LLO signs. Legal Load Only signs, when used on the local highway system, should be erected adjacent to bridges that have been identified by the Department as having insufficient capacity to routinely carry permit vehicles. Included with this circular letter is a copy of Illinois Standard R12-I108, modified to illustrate the format to be used for the LLO posting sign. The single axle and gross weight limits shown on the sign represent the maximums allowed for legally configured trucks traveling on highways under LAs jurisdiction.

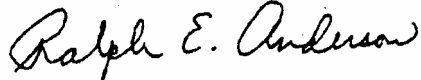
It should be noted that although not currently required, it is anticipated that revisions to the National Bridge Inspection Standards (NBIS) may create a federal mandate that LLO signs must be erected on all selected routes carrying vehicles operating with permits issued for an extended period of time.

Monitoring LLO Structures. To aid in tracking these LLO structures, Item 70 in ISIS is currently coded "L", indicating the structures are presently restricted to LLO. The BBS has coded ISIS Item 70A1 as "LL" for these structures to indicate that a recommendation to implement a LLO posting has been issued. If the LA elects to erect LLO signs, it will be necessary for the LA to notify the District; the District will then enter "LL" for ISIS Item 70A2 to indicate that signs have been placed. We have contacted the Office of Planning and Programming to coordinate the future revision of the Structure Information and Procedure Manual to include the "LL" designation for Items 70A1 & 70A2 .

The Department will provide a list of LLO bridges to the District Bureau of Local Roads and Streets to be distributed to the appropriate LAs. The list of LLO bridges is a wide-range list; please review the list for any discrepancies and provide us with your feedback. Since bridges will be added or deleted from the initial list for various reasons, an updated list will be maintained on the Bureau of Local Roads and Streets web site at <http://www.dot.il.gov/ppartners.html> under Resources for Local Agencies.

County Engineers are requested to share this information with the township/road district highway commissioners within their respective counties. The status of the bills mentioned in this letter can be viewed on the Illinois General Assembly web site at <http://www.legis.state.il.us/>. If you have any questions, please contact Mr. Jayme Schiff at 217/785-8748.

Sincerely,



Ralph E. Anderson, P.E., S.E.
Engineer of Bridges and Structures



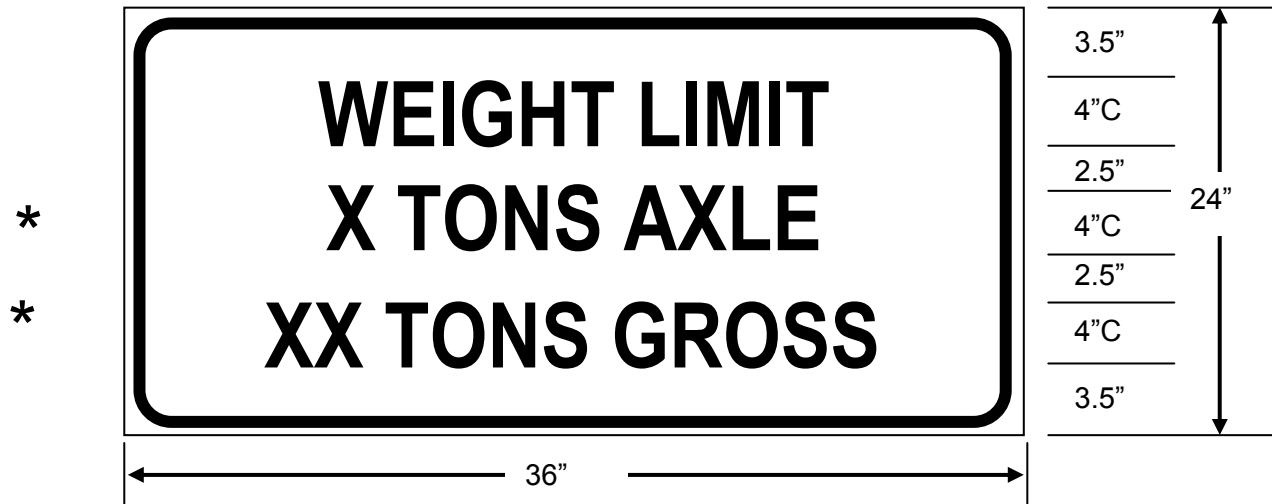
Charles J. Ingersoll, P.E.
Engineer of Local Roads and Streets

JFS/bat

cc FHWA, Illinois Division/Attn: Dan Brydl
Illinois Department of Natural Resources
Illinois State Toll Highway Authority
Township Officials of Illinois/Attn: Bryan Smith
Township Highway Commissioners of Illinois/Attn: Dale Schultz

Attachment

ILLINOIS STANDARD R12-I108



Black on white (retroreflective)
0.625" border
0.375" margin
1.5" corner radius

- * 9 or 10 tons per axle and 37 or 40 tons gross as specified.

NOTE: This sign is similar to the national standard R12-4 with the second line modified by elimination of the "PER" to shorten the line to better fit the sign with the two digit number. Also, note that the first line on the national standard is not drawn to scale.

Weight Limits for "Legal Load Only" Posting Signs

Highway System	Maximum Axle Weight	Maximum Gross Weight
Designated Truck Route System	10 Tons	40 Tons
Other State Highways	9 Tons	37 Tons